Rich County CRM Meeting
December 18th 2019 1:30 PM – 3:30 PM

Present: Dallen Smith, Terry Messmer, Taylor Payne, Michael Meek, Jennefer Parker, Patricia Winn, Jeff Sanocki, Mellissa Wood, Jordan Davis, Nancy Williams, Stephanie Graham, Cassie Mellon, Kris Hulby, Renee Chi, Karl Fleming, Scott Walker, Troy Forrest

Terry Messmer report - Ongoing Sage Grouse Studies by Hailey Wayment:
In 2019, due to weather, late snow, late spring and early winter, unable to access to all known sage grouse leks to get an accurate updated count. Therefore, the trends that were reported are down. This was the same across the region, not just Utah or Rich County. Sage grouse habitat is mostly grazed, 80% of it is grazed. Previous trends showed that from 2011-2013 the numbers were also down due to similar weather patterns and with spring snow and early winter that were harsh and long. A 9-12-year cycle need additional studies that match weather conditions with numbers.

In a comparison with the studies at Deseret Land & Livestock (DLL) and the 3 Creeks Grazing project (3C) the following was noted:

- DLL has had the highest lek counts around Rich County and even into Wyoming. Why?
  Several factors seem to be working, sagebrush treatments and intensive grazing are at the top.

- DLL has had more notable nest success. DLL uses prescribed rotational grazing versus 3C that uses seasonal grazing. There was updated fencing to separate some of the pastures this past year.

  Information on brood success is missing but going to use NDVI data over the past several years to see if a change is noted. Have noted that broods are nesting at peak times on the landscape. This is where forbes are at their highest quality for cattle. Previous studies have shown that the elk will follow the cattle in grazing. They will migrate to the pastures that the cattle have left. Additional information from NDVI data will be used to match pastures and studies of birds over thaw past 12 years. Equation should look like Birds + Cattle + NDVI=changes in landscape and numbers

Mellissa Wood update - BLM Sage Grouse Plan Amendment Effort:
The BLM 2019 plans are under a preliminary injunction. This means that the BLM can't use the 2019 plans and have to go back to the 2015 plans. The 2015 plans are still under litigation, but there hasn't been any preliminary injunction stopping their implementation, so they can still be
used. To help respond to the weaknesses the judge pointed out in the preliminary injunction, BLM has decided to create a Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to strengthen their analysis to help support the 2019 plan. There will be a public comment period on this Supplemental EIS in February. Mellissa will make sure that Dallen has the information about how and when to comment on the document to send out to the group.

Taylor Payne report - Three Creeks Project:
Still have a small amount of the last remaining projects on the infrastructure on the water system. Most of what is left in on Forest. Processes are in place for approval and completion. Also have a few remaining projects on the BLM to complete, including placing troughs. A major success has been adding a cross fence in Sage Creek Junction. There have been positive reactions from producers and others. There was also an additional ranch rider hired by the grazing company to bring the numbers up to 3 range riders. All BLM new fences are completed and new water systems are installed. There have been numerous tours during the past year to showcase the success with 3C.

Jordan Davis report - Duck Creek Allotment Update:
At this time there is a motion to change the judge.

Outcome based grazing:
Nothing to report.

WRI projects proposed for Rich County:
Jeff Sanocki – Logan Ranger District is asking for prescribed fires for approximately 14,000 acres in Logan canyon and adjacent areas. Thompson Logging sales are ongoing for the next 5 years. Also need additional weed treatments in Rich County. Grazing permits will not be displaced during the burning or treatments but could be moved slightly. More than likely, burning will follow the grazing. The completed burn project will happen over the next 7 years. There is a need for additional pre-commercial thinning in the Red Rider Units.

Cassie Mellon – Laketown Canyon creek is currently running out the creek bed. This will be the focus of improvement. Not to increase the stream or change it but rather to help keep the stream stay in the stream. In the same area, some Bear Lake promoters have been trying to encourage UTV use through the area involving the steam. This need to not be promoted as there is not an established trail, just the creek bed which means it is being disturbed by ongoing usage of motorized traffic.

Brad Jessop – No new projects in 2020. The 2019 Home Ranch allotment scatter was completed. Aerial seeding still needs to be completed and is due March 15, 2020. By way of Rich County forest health, a project for Aspen restructure west of Woodruff and Randolph is in the planning phase for fall 2021.
Scott Walker – In the future, would like to propose a deer winter range project to address deer needs.

GIP Projects proposed for Rich County:

Taylor Payne has the following projects that are being proposed.

- Yale Johnson – redevelop an existing spring, run a pipeline across current CRP ground (will be coming out of CRP), set 2 troughs.
- Weston South – in Eden canyon the water distribution needs improvement. Run a pipeline from existing spring. Project could benefit BLM ground but will be located on private ground
- Rafter J Cattle – previous project well went bad, need to re-drill a new well next to the original site.
- Steve Huffaker – run 3 miles of pipe on private ground between BLM and Forest.
- Argyle Ranch Project – will ask for additional WRI & GIP funding if needed. Protect fishery by adding fence for division.
- Crawford Mountain Angus – in Woodruff Creek along the Monte Cristo highway, would like to add division fence to utilize high mountain grazing and keep cattle out of lower meadows.
- Ben Weston – in conjunction with a Forest Service project, need to redevelop a spring on forest allotment that includes an area used as elk habitat.
- Dale Lamborn – on private ground, develop a new well with water system. Land is surrounded by grazing allotments. Would be a habitat improvement project as well.
- Bill Hopkin & Amelia Bradshaw – Southeast of Woodruff, intensive goat grazing project. Develop a well and water system on private ground. Forestry, Fire and State Lands are interested in access to storage tank in this area.
- Blair Francis – existing water systems, but would like to add pipeline to increase area they are serving.
- George Peart – on private ground but adjacent BLM on the Cut-Off allotment. Weed problem from previous sage spraying project. Would like to address the weeds with a spraying project. Has developed water and has pasture rotation in place.
- Ocie Frazier – on private ground but has fenced himself off of Three Creek allotment and would like to put in a water system.
- Stuart Family/Jade Willis – would like to bring existing water from Idaho to increase water system. Pipe additional water to add to a current pivot.
- Eldon Flinders – private ground that boarders Frazier’s and Three Creek. Would like to be part of Three Creeks, would be a new border fence.
- Woodruff Pasture – maintenance on existing infrastructure.
Vote to approve proposed projects – allowed one vote per agency. Karl Fleming – motion to approve. Taylor Payne – motion to amend list to revisit Laketown road issues to next round. Dallen Smith – 2nd motion to approve. Vote – Yea – 6 votes, Nay – 0 votes

-Other Business

Dallen Smith – working on a project to prove April precipitation is the largest factor in determining forage growth. This will be located close to the 3 local weather stations.

Question – Would it be possible to remove wire around previous aspen stand projects that have been completed?

Next Meeting Date:

Dallen will send out a Doodle poll to schedule summer tour dates. The Board needs to meet in the Spring to update the CRM Plan.